



EVERY CHILD. EVERY SCHOOL. EVERY DAY.

Life After High School: Options & Opportunities for Students with Exceptionalities

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Objectives for Today's Presentation

- ❖ Understand the educational landscape for high school students with exceptionalities in New Orleans.
- ❖ Identify high school strategies and supports that help prepare students with exceptionalities for the transition to and through high school.
- ❖ Discuss current pathways & opportunities for high school students with exceptionalities.



Meeting Agenda

1

Educational Landscape

2

High School Supports for
Students with Exceptionalities

3

Current Pathways &
Opportunities

4

Looking Ahead & Next Steps

IDEA: What is Special Education?

Defines the purpose of special education as

- A free appropriate public education that emphasizes special education and related services
- Designed to meet students' unique needs and to prepare them for further education, employment, and independent living.



IDEA Definition of Transition Services

A coordinated set of activities for a student with an exceptionality:

- **A plan** that is designed within a **results-oriented process** and focuses on **improving the academic and functional achievement** of the child
- **is based on the individual child's needs, taking into account the child's strengths, preferences, and interests**



Current Landscape: Statewide

- Greater statewide focus on supporting schools and districts with improving transition services
- Establishment of the Louisiana Center for Effective Transitions (LCET)
- Initiative from the LDOE that support local school systems, students and families with transition services & planning (multi-year grant)
- More focus on supporting students with exceptionalities with career exploration & job readiness (LCET)



Current Landscape: NOLA-PS

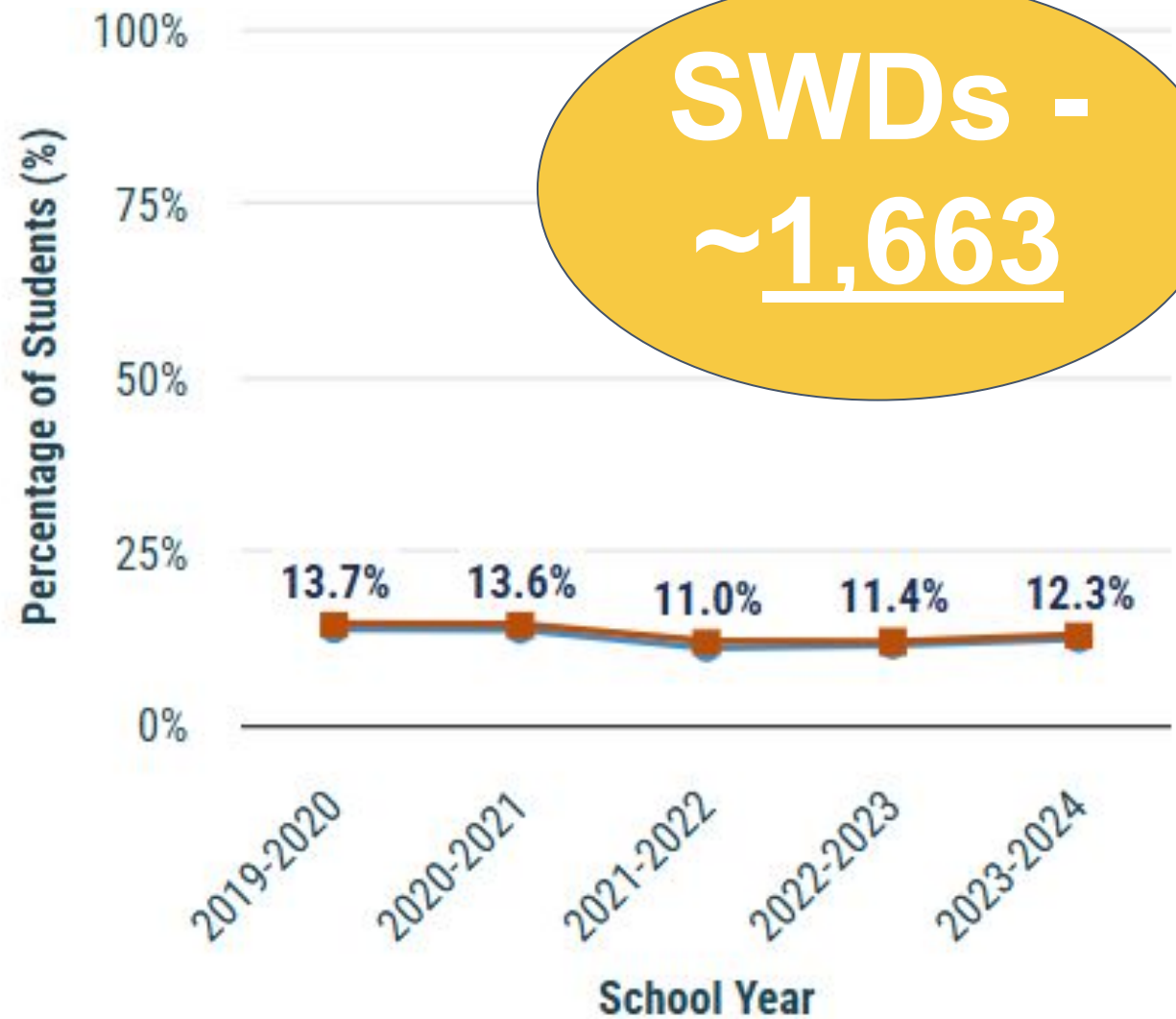
- Unique, decentralized educational landscape in Orleans Parish
 - All 24 high schools in NOLA-PS are charter schools
- NOLA-PS serves as the authorizer for the overwhelmingly majority of schools
- Part of our district's commitments emphasizes support for diverse learners & high-quality schools for all students
- Schools & staff have the knowledge and resources to strengthen transition programming & improve outcomes





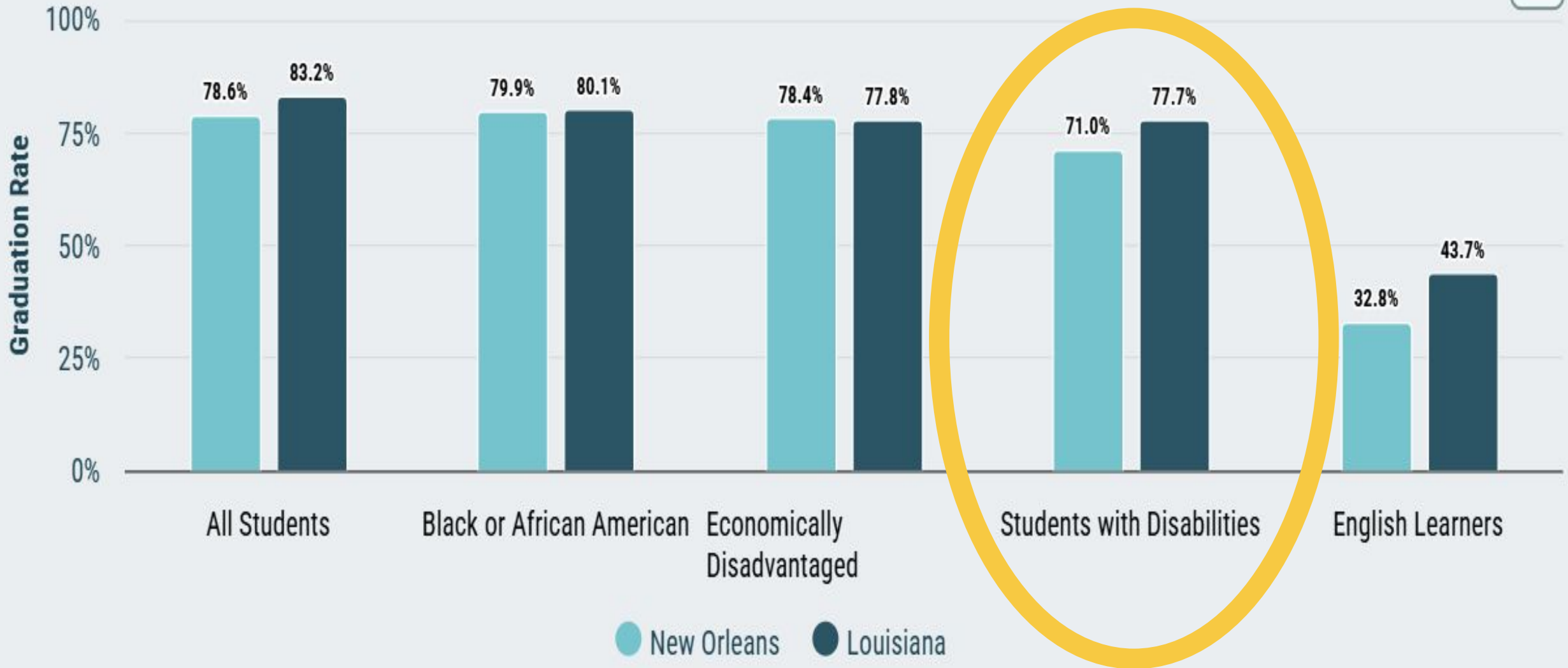
13,527
9-12

Data Snapshot



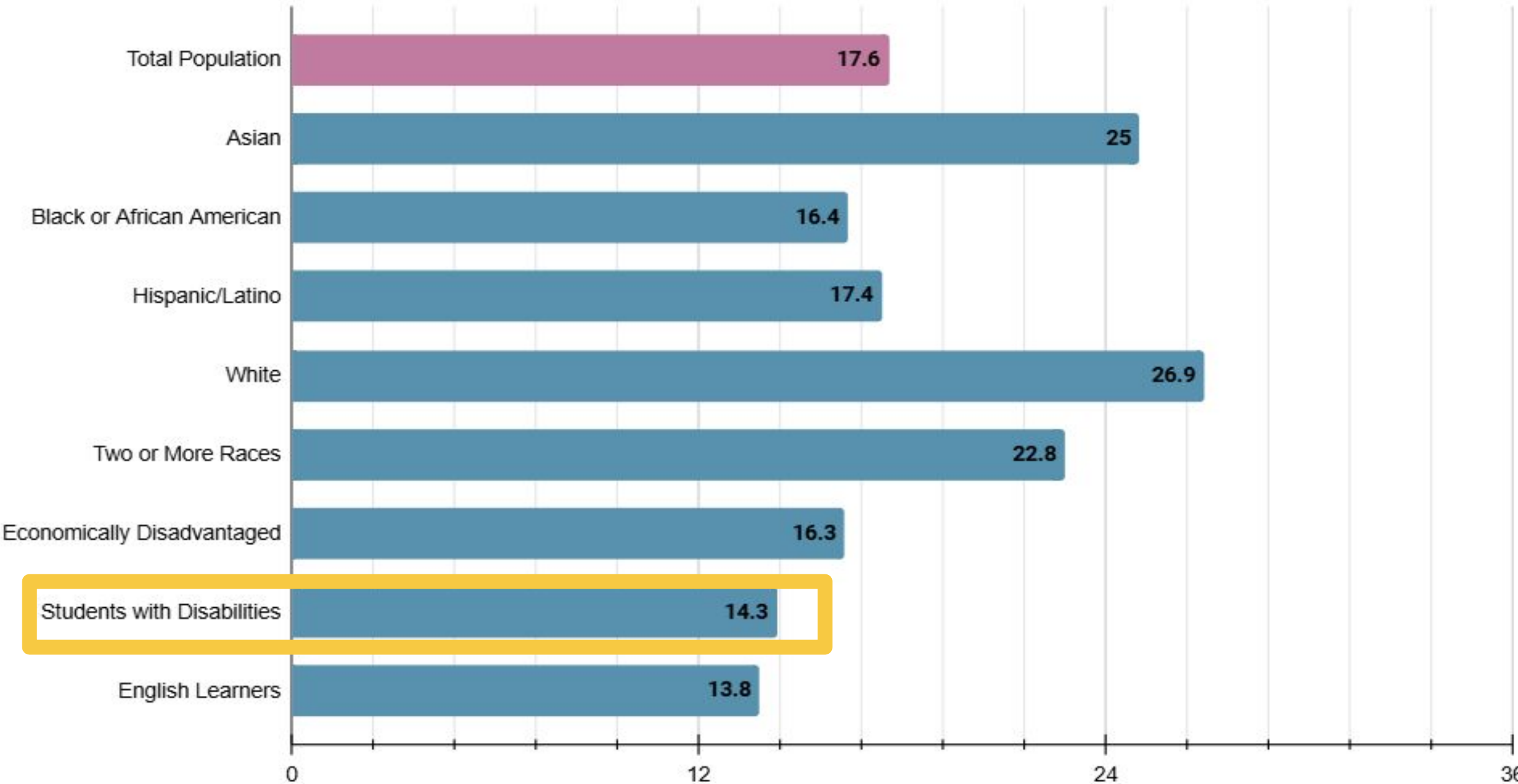
SWDs -
~1,663

Class of 2023 Cohort Graduation Rate



ACT Composite Scores in Orleans Parish (23-24)

Source: [LDOE: Subgroup ACT Performance](#)



13 Categories of Exceptionality

Source: [IDEA: Categories of Disability](#)

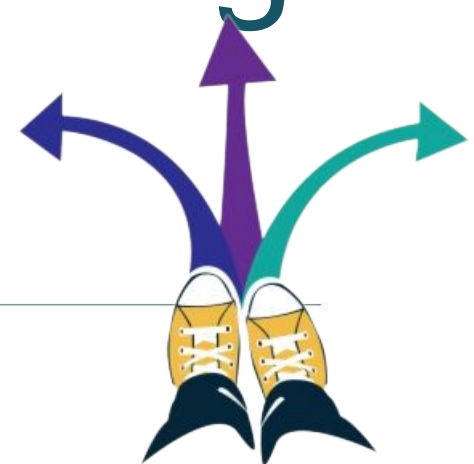
Autism	Deaf-Blindness
Specific Learning Disability	Speech or Language Impairment
Other Health Impairment	Emotional Disturbance
Intellectual Disability	Developmental Delay
Multiple Disabilities	Hearing Impairment
Orthopedic Impairment	Visual Impairment
Traumatic Brain Injury	

For a student to qualify for special education services, they must have an exceptionality as defined by IDEA [that] **no impacts that student's educational performance...**

A disability may impact a student's
educational performance.

It should NOT determine
a student's life
outcomes.

In our roles, we can ensure that students have access to opportunities and pathways that include college, career, and/or independent living.



With collaboration and determination,
we can create a system where all
students with exceptionalities have
the chance to thrive beyond high
school.





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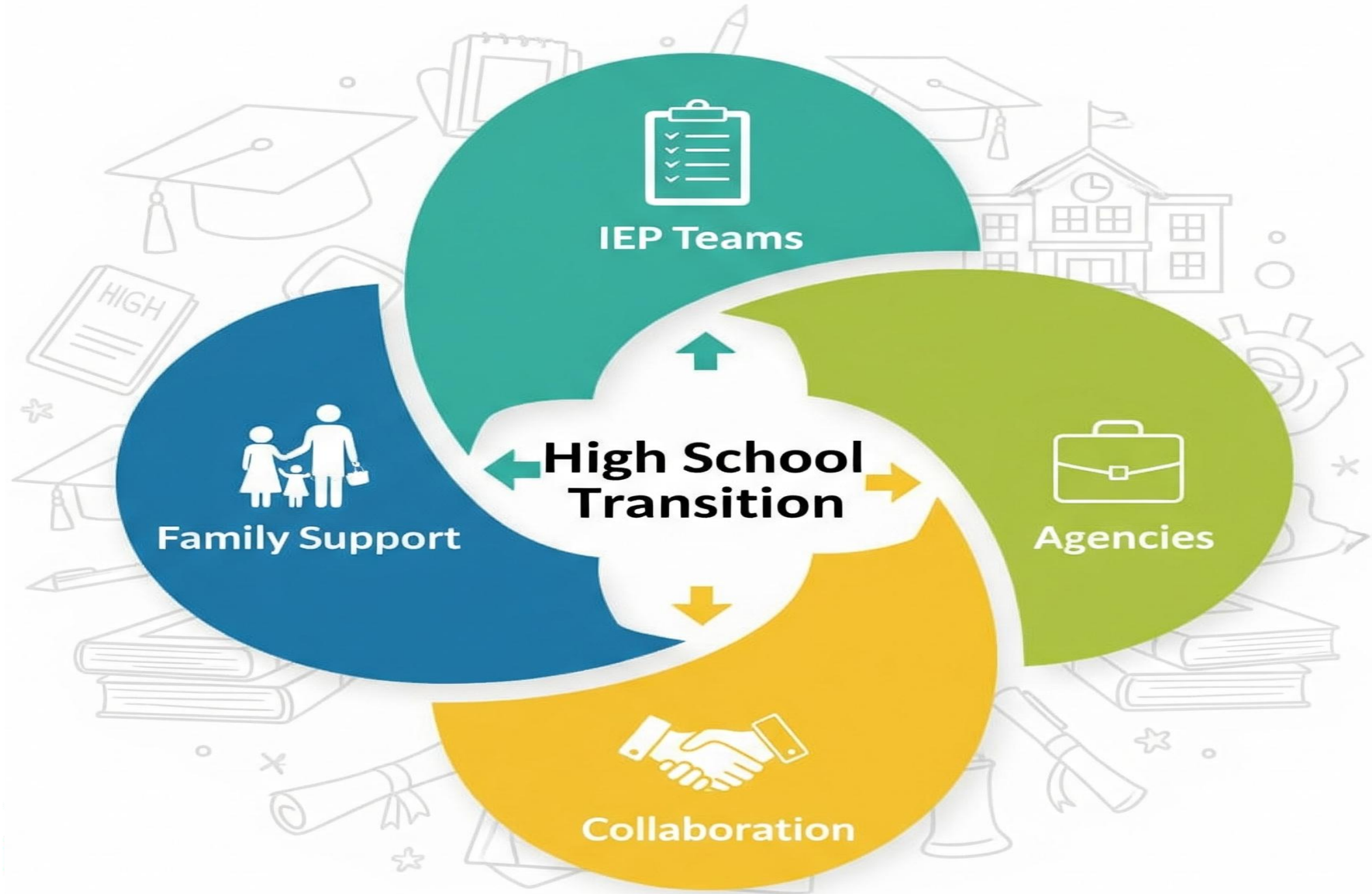
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Reflection & Next Steps



System Realities

- 8th = terminal grade for most schools
- Can be a huge transition going to a new high school
- Potential gaps in communication → middle schools & high schools
- Imperative that families, schools, and staff partner work collaboratively
- Earlier the better to start the discussion → classes, course progression, diploma pathways



Considerations: Starting High School

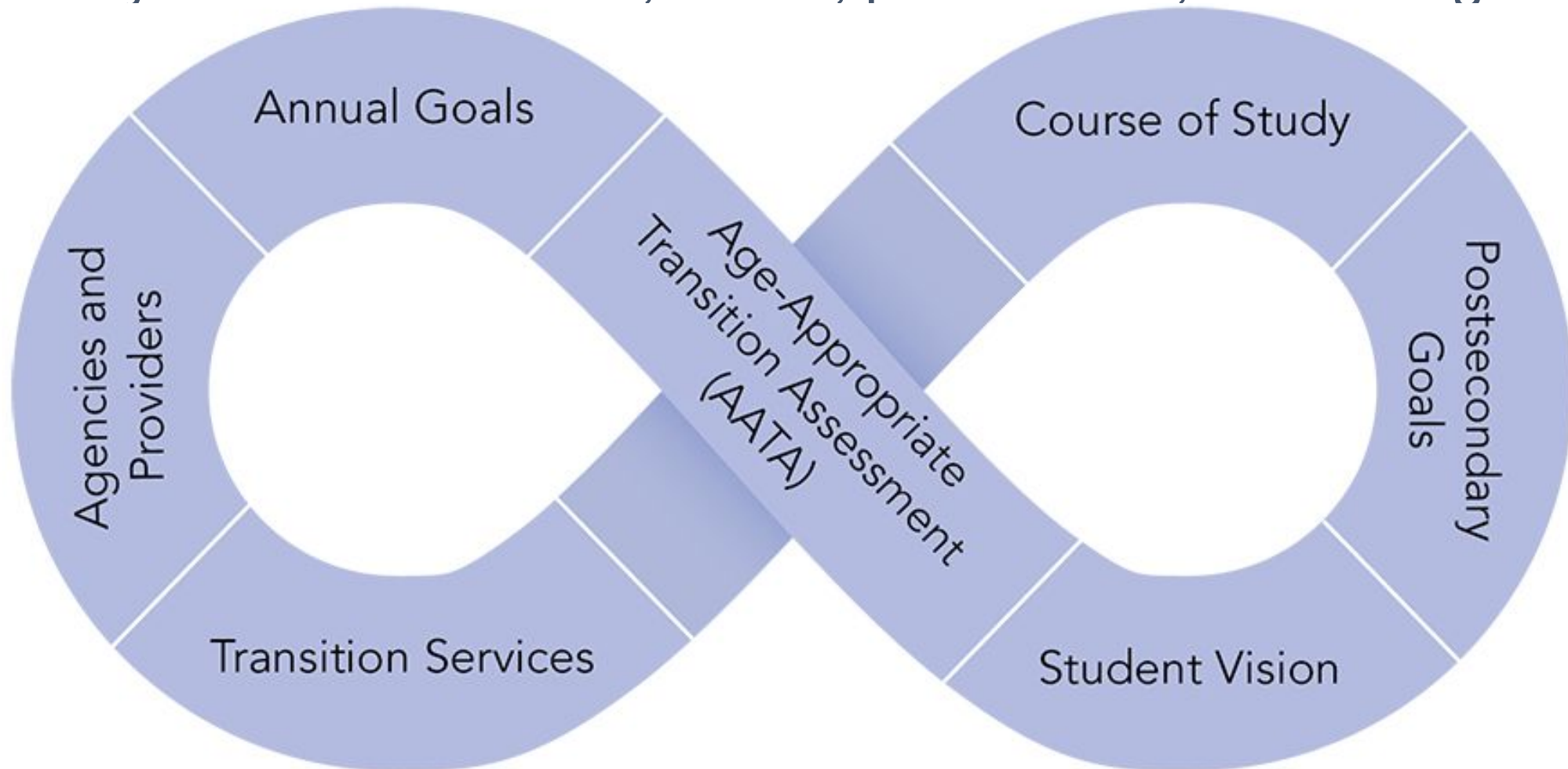
- In our roles → inform families and staff about graduation options, including the diploma pathways
- Begin to plan appropriate academic experiences & schedule coursework
- Individual Graduation Plan can foster the discussion → around academics, career readiness and transition planning

Source: [LDOE - High School Planning Guidebook](#)

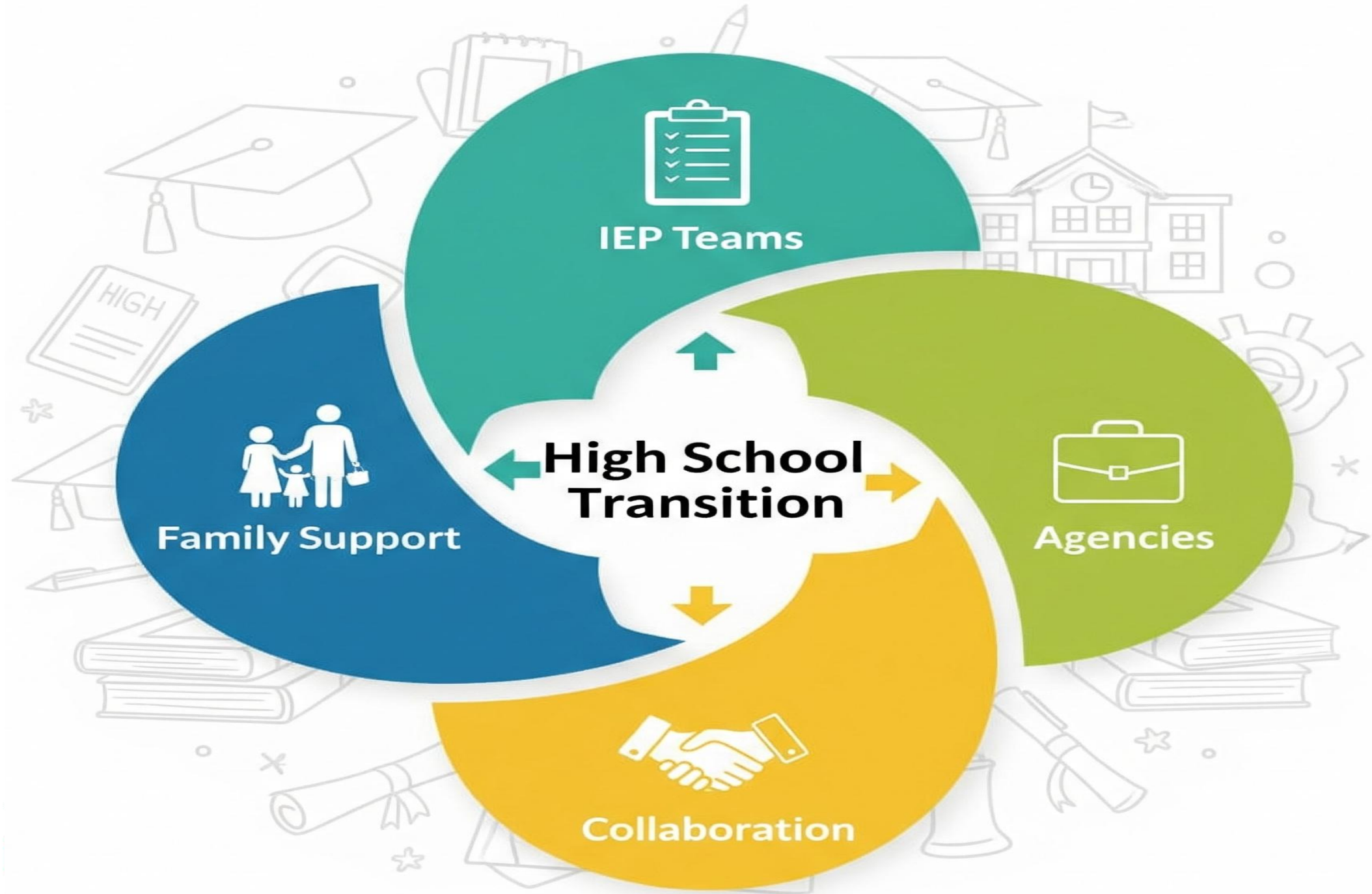
BASIC INFORMATION			
Name:		9th Grade Entry Date:	<input type="checkbox"/> Academic Support Plan Attached
High School Attending:		Originating Middle School:	
EDUCATION GOALS			
Diploma Pathway	<input type="checkbox"/> TOPS University Diploma		<input type="checkbox"/> Jump Start TOPS Tech (Career) Diploma
Diploma Endorsements	<input type="checkbox"/> Community Service Diploma Endorsement		<input type="checkbox"/> State Seal of Biliteracy <input type="checkbox"/> STEM Diploma Endorsement
Financial Aid & Scholarships	<input type="checkbox"/> TOPS Honors <input type="checkbox"/> TOPS Performance <input type="checkbox"/> TOPS Opportunity <input type="checkbox"/> TOPS Tech Early Start <input type="checkbox"/> TOPS Tech Financial Aid: Completion Date: _____		
COLLEGE & CAREER GOALS			
Career Specialty/Occupation (Option 1):		Career Specialty/Occupation (Option 2):	
Career Cluster® (Option 1): -		Career Cluster® (Option 2): -	
Jump Start Graduation Pathway: Choose one		Jump Start Graduation Pathway: Choose one	
Post-High School Workforce Plans: <input type="checkbox"/> On-the-Job Training <input type="checkbox"/> Military <input type="checkbox"/> Employment		Certifications: <input type="checkbox"/> Statewide <input type="checkbox"/> Regional <input type="checkbox"/> Complementary	

Considerations: Elements of Transition

- Transition Assessments are critical element of transition planning
 - Want to identify student's interests, needs, preferences, and strengths.



Source: [OCALI Transition Elements](#)



HS Supports: IEP Teams & Transition

- IEP Teams should focus on supporting the student on the pathway that best aligns students' needs & post-secondary goals
- Identify what career the student might want to pursue & what type of preparation is required
- Discuss supports & skills that student might need
- IEP Meeting = opportunity for student voice & self-advocacy



Transition Timeline

- What specific skills does this student need for future success?
- What sort of input can the student can provide (in terms of their postsecondary goals, IEP, etc.)?
- What sort of choices can they make (in terms of courses, career exploration, decision-making, etc.) ?

MAPPING THE FUTURE

Check these milestones to ensure high school paves the pathway for young adult success and achievement!

AGES 15-16

The IEP includes a [Transition Plan](#), aligned with the High School and Beyond Plan. The student is a member of the IEP team, which plans a pathway toward a diploma and target graduation date.

AGES 17-18

Coursework, IEP, High School and Beyond Plan, Apply to state agencies, review graduation requirements

AGES 18-19

The student may continue education in a high school transition program.

AGES 13-14

Look at high-school classes, discuss career & school options, complete inventories

AGE 16

Get a state identification card. Consider Pre-Employment Transition Services

AGE 18

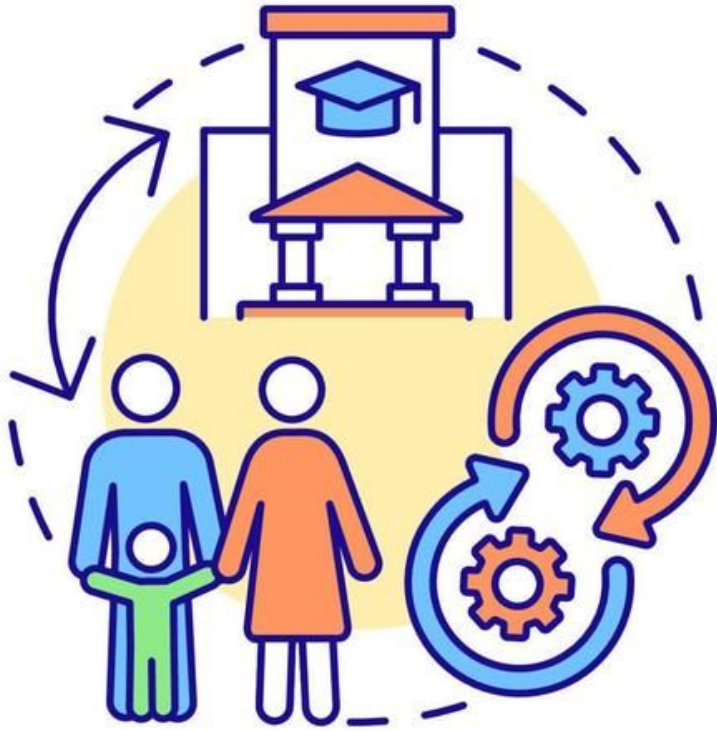
Determine whether to extend services, focus on job readiness & independent living skills, Age of Majority

AGES 20-21

Get support for social services agencies, options for supported housing & other key programs

HS Supports - Family

- Crucial to involve and partner with families
- Proactively communicate, especially when it comes to graduation and when graduating will happen
- IEP team decision = special education services end when a student turns 21 or graduates from high school



HS Supports: Collaboration

- Between IEP teams, families, and community partners
- Shared expertise helps ensure students receive the supports they need for success
- Open & ongoing conversation builds trust and consistency
- Working together creates stronger pathways & supports to postsecondary opportunities



HS Supports: Agencies

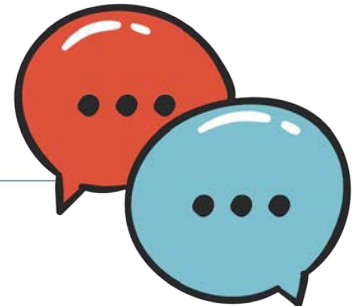
- Louisiana Rehabilitation Services (**LRS**)
- State agency that works with individuals with exceptionalities to help gain the skills needed to get & find a career
- Through the WIOA, dedicated federal funds for Pre-Employment Transition Services (**Pre-ETS**)
- Focus on workforce readiness & exploring postsecondary opportunities



Source: [LDOE - Jumpstart Convention](#)

Partner Discussion

- *Thinking about your own school and/or role:*
- ***What is working well in terms of preparing students with exceptionalities for college, career, and/or independent living?***
- ***What barriers and/or challenges currently exist?***





Key Takeaways

- **Student-Centered Planning:** transition planning aligns to student's strengths, needs, and postsecondary goals
- **Family Partnerships:** essential partners in planning for life after high school
- **Collaboration Matters:** between IEP teams, agencies, and families
- **Agency Connections:** leverage resources (like LRS and Pre-ETS) to help expand opportunities
- **Early & Ongoing Planning:** start in MS & continue throughout HS





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Current Pathways & Opportunities



CTE



**Transition Services
and Planning**



**Alternative
Pathways**



**Comprehensive
School Supports**

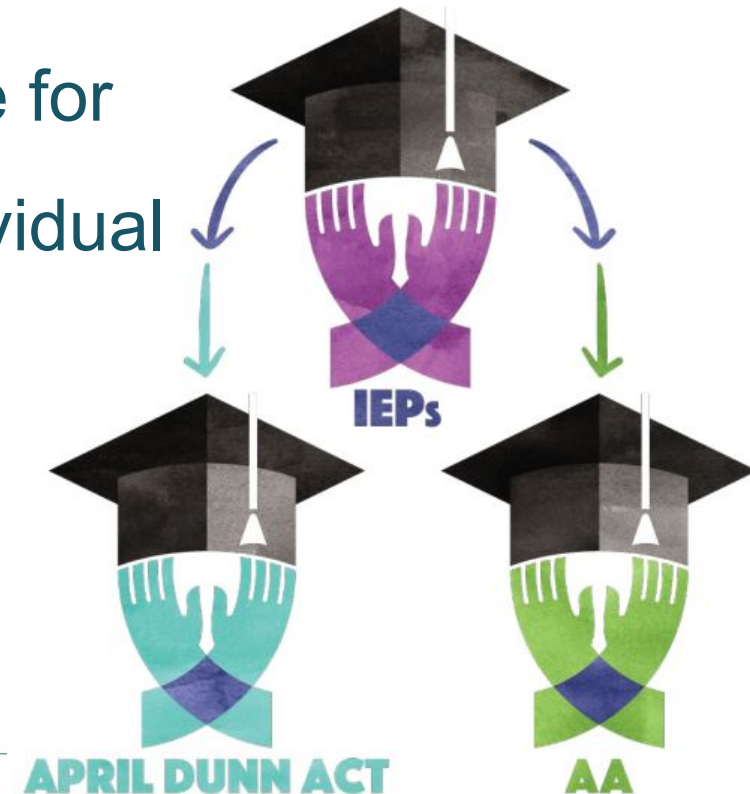
Comprehensive School Supports

- Continuum of supports & services to help improve academic & personal outcomes
- Access to appropriate accommodations and all necessary supports
- Determine appropriate academic pathway & diploma track
- Proactively encourage student & family participation
- Foster learning environments where all students are supported & can thrive



Alternative Pathways

- Graduation pathways in Louisiana:
 - TOPS University Diploma
 - Jump Start TOPs Tech Career Diploma
 - For students with exceptionalities, that are eligible for the April Dunn Act → earn a diploma through individual performance criteria created by their IEP team
 - Jump Start TOPS Tech Career Diploma - LEAP Connect Pathway



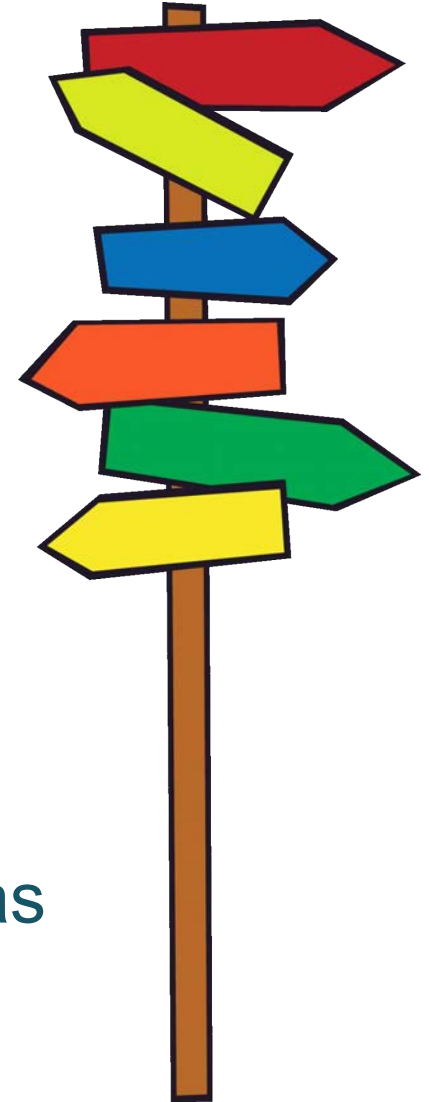
Impact of Alternative Pathways

- April Dunn Act (originally called Act 833)→ created an alternate means to graduation for certain students with exceptionalities
- IEP team determines eligibility → ability to earn Carnegie units & graduate with a diploma through alternate means
- Across the state → ***increased graduation rates***



Transition Services & Planning

- Crucial element in helping students succeed
- Use age-appropriate assessments to help inform the development of goals
- Chance to explore careers and receive job readiness training
- Course of study & experiences should align to student's goals
- Depending on the student & their postsecondary goals, instruction might be needed in independent living & other areas
- Inquire about eligibility for LRS Services (Pre-ETS & VR)



Career & Technical Education (CTE)



- Not limited in their choice of pathways
- CTE teacher = can be a member of IEP team
- Consider the student's careers goals & interests/strengths/skills
- Explore postsecondary opportunities & job requirements
- Consider IBCs that align to student's pathway
- Determine accommodations & supports for IBCs

Pathways & Opportunities



- **New Orleans Career Center** → career preparation & training
 - Offers credentials in the areas of healthcare, building trades, manufacturing, culinary arts, hospitality management, and digital production/IT
 - Open to all high students in Orleans Parish
- **YouthForce NOLA** → offers work-based learning and career exploration experience
 - Focus on careers in business services, health sciences, digital media and skilled crafts

Planning for Industry Based Credentials

Industry Based Credential:		SafeServ Food Handler & Food Protection Manager	
Jumpstart Pathway:	Hospitality & Tourism; Agriculture Tech	Certifying Agency:	ServSafe National Restaurant Association



Appendix F

Request for Exam Accommodation

This form must be submitted directly to National Restaurant Association Solutions (NRA Solutions) by the examinee. The examinee must provide the following information and fax this form to 866.665.9570 (toll-free) or to 312.583.9853 (local direct). All accommodations are subject to pre-approval or denied accommodation status via email. It is the examinee's responsibility to notify their proctor of the accommodation requested. The proctor can prepare for the accommodation.

Section II. Type of Accommodation Requested

(Select all that apply)

- ☐ Reader (signed *Reader Non-disclosure & Confidentiality Agreement* must be attached)
- ☐ Separate room/alternate exam location
- ☐ Extra time
- ☐ Scribe
- ☐ Sign language interpreter

FLEXIBLE OPTIONS

Training and exams are available online and in a classroom. [Compare formats.](#)

Courses can be taken in English, Spanish, Chinese, and Korean.

Exams can be taken in English, Spanish, Chinese, Korean, Japanese, and Canadian French.

Case Study



James is an 11th-grade student who receives special education services for a mild intellectual disability. He is hardworking, punctual, and thrives in structured, hands-on environments. James recently began a Culinary Arts course and has shown strong interest in pursuing a career in food service. His teacher believes he could earn the **SafeServ Food Handler certification** this year, with the long-term goal of working in the restaurant industry after graduation. James sometimes needs extra time to process written instructions and benefits from visual supports. His family is excited about his career interest but is unsure how to navigate the training and certification requirements.

- **What potential could help James succeed in earning his certification and preparing for work in the restaurant industry?**
- Think about the different school supports, transition supports, and community partnerships



Potential Supports for James

School Supports:

- Accommodations: visuals, step-by-step guides, extra time
- Culinary Arts coursework linked to SafeServ content
- Work-based learning in school cafeteria or other

Transition Supports:

- Course of study goals aligned to transition goals
- Pre-ETS services (job exploration, workplace readiness)
- Community-based practice in customer service & teamwork

Community Agencies & Partnerships:

- Local restaurant internships/apprenticeships
- Eligibility for LRS Services (Vocational Rehabilitation & Pre-ETS)
- Looking into culinary programs





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Reflection



- *As we close today, reflect on the following guiding questions:*
 - What's one strategy or resource you plan to bring back to your school or that will help you in your role?
 - What are some additional ways that you in your role can help support students with exceptionalities in their journey to and through HS?

Next Steps

Short-Term Actions

- Review & update transition practices at the school-level
- Identify students who might be ready for additional opportunities & options (Pre-ETS, IBCs, etc.)
- IEP meetings = opportunity for goal-setting, student voice

Long-Term Actions

- Strengthen partnerships with community partners & agencies
- Share information & resources to help improve collaboration



A disability should never determine a student's life outcomes

In our roles, we can ensure that every student can have access to meaningful postsecondary opportunities that align to their long-term goals, whether that includes college, career, or independent living.



Resources

[NOLA-PS Transition Assessment Toolkit](#)



[LDOE- High School Planning Guidebook](#)



[LDOE - Transition Guidance for IEP Teams](#)



[National Technical Center Assistance on Transition \(NTACT:C\)](#)



[Project 10: Transition Education Network](#)



[Families Helping Families of Greater NOLA: Transition High School to Adulthood](#)



Q & A



Thank You!





Contact Information

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